



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
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### **Changes Coming to Help Battle Hunger and Food Insecurity in N.M.**

*Santa Fe, September 9, 2003* - The Human Services Department (HSD) and the New Mexico Association of Food Banks (NMAFB) are teaming up to increase the frequency of food distributions statewide. "We have carefully evaluated our current methods and have determined that we can get more food to communities on a more frequent basis by working closely with our partners in the Food Bank Association," said Katie Falls, director of HSD's Income Support Division.

Beginning next month, HSD's Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) plans to deliver its USDA surplus food to sites managed by the NMAFB for further distribution by them to soup kitchens and food pantries statewide. Currently, TEFAP reaches about 100 sites every other month. With this new food partnership, USDA food will be available at over 300 locations on a weekly, or even a daily basis. "We are so pleased to follow the lead of forty three other states in forming a new public-private partnership with Human Services to feed hungry people with USDA commodities," said Melody Wattenbarger, president of the board of the NMAFB. "This progressive new way of distributing will make millions of pounds of nutritious food available to the thousands of New Mexicans who struggle to put food on the table for their families."

Each year, the USDA helps farmers by purchasing food that might otherwise be wasted for use by states' food assistance programs like TEFAP, which distributes four million pounds of food each year. The food is nutritious and consists of meat products, fruits, vegetables, milk and grain. Public and private food distribution efforts, like TEFAP, have been around in different forms since the Great Depression.

The NMAFB is an association of seven food banks that distribute excess food, mostly

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from large super market chains. These food banks distribute more than 17 million pounds of food each year through a statewide network of more than 600 food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens, ranging in size from the small La Casa de la Hope in Tucumcari that serves transients along I -40, to large soup kitchens like the Albuquerque Rescue Mission on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Southwest.

Letters were sent last month to organizations currently under contract with the Human Services Department thanking them for supporting TEFAP over the years and informing them that changes are coming, which will give the NMAFB a greater role in determining how to make food available to families seeking these services. Organizations, such as food pantries and soup kitchens, and those receiving the food services who want more information on how these changes may affect them can call the Human Services Department at 505 827-7750 or 1-800-648-7167, NMAFB at 505 247-2052 or any one of the below listed members of the NMAFBs.

Roadrunner Food Bank, in Albuquerque, 505 247-2052

ECHO, Inc., in Farmington, 505 325-8222

Lifesaver Food Bank, in Clovis, 505 763-6130

The Community Pantry, in Gallup, 505 726-8068

The Food Depot, in Santa Fe, 505 471-1633

The Salvation Army, in Roswell, 505 625-2030

Community Action Agency, in Las Cruces, 505 541-7941

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